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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 005400

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SUBJECT: FRANCE NOT INCLINED TO FIGHT HRC SPECIAL SESSION
ON LEBANON

REF: STATE 130145

Classified By: PolMC Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 (B & D).

¶1. (C) Deputy PolCouns presented reftel points August 9 with MFA DAS-equivalent for IO Human Rights Affairs Beatrice Le Fraper du Hellen, stressing the U.S. political concern that Human Rights Council (HRC) discussions of Lebanon could have a negative impact on discussions in New York on a Lebanon UN Security Council Resolution, and our position of principle that the HRC should desist from recommendations in cases where the UN Security Council is already seized of a matter.

¶2. (C) Le Fraper said France had no disagreement with U.S. in substance, namely on the importance of obtaining a UNSC resolution on Lebanon. That said, France did not believe that HRC discussions of Lebanon would in fact interfere with Security Council deliberations, or that France had the power to prevent such discussions in any case. She noted that France had already accepted the idea that the HRC should be able to meet at any moment to discuss human rights issues. Moreover, given that support of one-third of the HRC's members was sufficient to put an issue on the agenda and that "they have the votes," France judged that there was little use in expending political capital trying to oppose it.

¶3. (C) Le Fraper advised against overestimating the importance of the HRC, saying that discussion of Lebanon would have no direct impact on deliberations in New York. Saying effectively that France was in abstention mode, she said the GOF would not send its Ambassador to the meeting, and that it would concentrate its efforts instead on working within the EU to ensure that any eventual HRC statement remained as balanced as possible. She repeated that whatever was adopted would have no impact on the situation in New York.

¶4. (C) Deputy PolCouns reiterated that the U.S. also had procedural concerns related to Article 12 of the UN Charter. Le Fraper said that this principle had already been violated when the HRC was encouraged to discuss Sudan and Congo before the UNSC did so. At the time, she stated, France had insisted simply that the HRC not do anything that would subsequently have an adverse effect on the work of the UN Security Council. France believed it was legitimate for the HRC to raise human rights issues, so long as it did not drift into matters of a political or military nature.

¶5. (C) Le Fraper promised to share reftel points with the Political Director and said she would inform us of any change in the French position.

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